

## **RESEARCHING AND UNDERSTANDING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MULTILITERACIES: WHY, WHERE, AND HOW?**

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At present, there is a worldwide concern that educational systems are outdated and failing to prepare young people for their futures. As a response to ongoing social, cultural, economic and technological changes and their learning requirements, Finland has recently renewed its national core curriculum for early childhood, pre-school and basic education. These new curricula introduce multiliteracies as one of the key transversal competence areas that will be educationally addressed already from early childhood onwards. The premise of multiliteracies is that "reading" and "writing" today encompass a broad ecology of modalities and forms of communication, ranging from more conventional literacies to new forms of digital communication and expression. In my talk, I will consider current educational efforts in Finland to promote young people's multiliteracy competencies from the viewpoint of a) equity and inclusiveness, b) 21st century skills, and c) learner agency and identity. I will enrich my reflections via examples of educational activities that position young people as active, creative and critical investigators and producers of and with multiliteracies in their social ecologies. These examples underscore the importance of supporting young people for operational, cultural and critical expression and understanding required for informed and accountable participation and learning in contemporary society. My talk will end by pointing out the importance of researching and understanding multiliteracies and related educational efforts not only from the perspective of developing young people's knowledge and skills but also from the perspective of their identity formation, that is, who young people feel they are, how they see and treat others and who they want to become.

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